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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 13, 2012, at 10 a.m.

Senate

MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2012

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord of mercy, we trust Your power and will not be afraid.

In these challenging days, give our lawmakers peace that comes from confidence in Your providential powers. When they feel pessimistic, remind them that You are able to keep them from stumbling and that deliverance comes from You. You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Help our Senators today to strive to do as much good as they can in as many circumstances and to as many people as they can.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 12, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule 1, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COONS thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

RECOGNIZING CHAPLAIN BLACK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we rarely acknowledge the Chaplain here in the Senate, and we should more often. We are so fortunate as a body to have this good man leading prayer virtually every day. He gives tremendous thought to his prayers and what he should say. His prayers are always very challenging and encompass the issues we are dealing with.

For those of you who are watching him and who don't know anything about this man, he is a role model for what America is all about. He was raised by a single mother, and she would give him a few pennies each day that he would memorize a verse of Scripture. I have seen the man and his

ability to speak volumes. The way he pulls up things he has in his brain reminds me of Senator Byrd, who for many years sat right here behind where I am, and who had a remarkable ability to remember what he read or studied. Admiral Black is the same.

So I speak for the whole Senate—not Democrats or Republicans but for this body—in expressing our appreciation for the good work he does, not only the prayers he offers here but the counseling he does on a daily basis here in the Senate.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, each day the Senate begins its workday with a solemn ritual, and we just did. We pledge allegiance to our flag. Each day we rededicate our loyalty to this flag and to the fundamental pillar for which it stands—the right to justice for all. Unfortunately, for tens of millions of Americans, that right to equal justice under law is at risk, and I am sorry to say it is at risk because of Republican ideology.

More than half the Nation's population—160 million Americans—live in parts of this country that have been declared a judicial emergency. What does that mean? It means that more than half the people in our country who seek justice in the courts and the judges find that the courts are strained to the breaking point under a backlog so intense an emergency has been declared.

The Presiding Officer is an expert on bankruptcy and knows how important filling those bankruptcy slots are. One

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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